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INFO RUEH2L/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 001939

SIPDIS  
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EO 12958 DECL: 07/25/2018

TAGS PGOV, PREL, PINR, UK

SUBJECT: A POLITICAL BODY BLOW TO GORDON BROWN AS LABOUR

LOSES SCOTTISH BY-ELECTION

REF: LONDON 1913

Classified By: Political Counselor Rick Mills for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. The Scottish National Party's 365 vote victory in yesterday's Glasgow East by-election over Labour is another body blow to Gordon Brown.  
A Political Earthquake

¶2. (U) In what the winning Scottish National Party candidate called a "political earthquake," Labour went down to an unanticipated defeat in yesterday's election.

¶3. (C) Forsaking its traditional soapbox issue of Scottish independence, SNP leader and Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond personally spearheaded the SNP's campaign.

The Winners

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¶4. (C) The winner in yesterday's election is clearly the SNP. The vote is an enormous boost for the party and its leader, Alex Salmond, who stands to benefit from the result.

¶5. (C) The other winner the morning after are the Conservatives, despite their third place finish. The Conservatives are pleased to have done well in the election. Many Conservatives thought making the speech in the district was a mistake, but it appears not to have harmed the Conservative cause.

What's Next for Gordon Brown?

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¶6. (C) Nick Brown, Labour's Deputy Chief Whip, told Poloff that Gordon Brown will use the summer months to "hunker down" and keep his party at the top of the political agenda.

¶7. (C) Nick Brown acknowledged that many Labour members were hoping that an election victory in the Glasgow by-election, no matter how narrow, would be followed by a general election.

Comment

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¶8. (C/NF) With Parliament on recess until October 6, Labour will have time for "long and hard" reflection. Attention now turns to the September election.

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